

Forgotten Heroes Closed

by mark twenty

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Summary: Bred to fight and to serve. They would give their lives for the human race if asked. Bred to win and to accomplish. They would risk their lives for anyone. They are bred to be warriors in the shadows, to save the world and be eternally forgotten.

1. Preface

****Forgotten Heroes****

****Preface**

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_**2100-2140: EARLY CONFLICTS

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> By the 22nd century overpopulation was a serious issue in human society. Global warming had been controlled by scientists, but overpopulation was threatening the balance humans had achieved with nature.<p>

The world powers of the era were clearly divided into two groups, which cleverly avoided another world war. Even though frantic negotiations were made, several brutal conflicts stand out in this period on human history. Conflicts of particular historical importance included the Jovian Moons War, The Rain Forest War, The Yellow Sea War, and slowly moving quarrels, all across Human settlements on the Solar System that followed.

As overpopulation and political unrest on Earth increased, a number of new political movements formed. The most noteworthy dissident movements of the period were the "Koslovics" and the "Frieden" movement. The Koslovicsâ€”supporters of neo-Communist hardliner Vladimir Koslovâ€”sought a return to the glory days of Communism and

the elimination of corporate and capitalist influence, particularly in orbital facilities and off world colonies. This movement was strongly supported by Russia, North Korea, Cuba, China and Vietnam.

The Frieden movement, backed by the USNA, Great Britain, Germany, Brazil and their allies was the other large political movement of the era. The name was given by the UGR (Unified German Republic) corporations who were frequent targets of Koslovic groups. The US and Great Britain supported the UGR and pulled over many strong allies to their side. Other countries that backed the movement were Japan, France and Spain. "Frieden" literally means "peace"â€"in this case, they believed that peace could be achieved only once the "oppressors on Terra Firma" and the issues of overpopulation were dealt with.

The rest of the world remained neutral for the time being or supported the UN in its decision to try and avoid war and instead focus on interstellar travel.

****2105**

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> Several attacks of Koslovic supporters on UGR supported mining companies on the Jovian moons catalyzed the Jovian Moons Conflict. Attacks on UN vessels by a Koslov friendly terrorist group pushed the political conflicts to new levels and the UN retaliated by unofficially supporting the Frieden movement. And thus, The Jovian Moons War began. Though this was not the first armed conflict in our Solar System, it was easily one of the bloodiest, and is generally considered to be the spark of increased friction and militarization that followed.<p>

****2107**

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> All world powers and supporters of the Frieden and Koslovic movements sponsored colonies within the Jovian moons and thus fought to defend their territory. With human space vessels lacking a real ability to fight in space the battles were fought within the colonies. During this time UN forces finally joined, officially, the Frieden movement by using their troops to assault the last remaining Koslovic stronghold on the Jovian moons as the year ended. The Jovian Moons Campaign escalated tensions, which escalated tension on Earth that led to wars on the planet itself.<p>

****2108**

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> Marked as one of the bloodiest years in human history, this year marked the definite end of the Jovian Moons War, and the beginning of the Rain Forest and the Yellow Sea Wars. The UNSC was officially formed by the union of a few Frieden supporters with the United Nation supporters. Great Britain, the United States of North America (Mexico, USA and Canada), Brazil and Japan joined the UN to form the UNSC and began amassing a huge army. While Brazil and Japan led their forces to fight the wars on Earth, the USNA and UK joined to construct the first battalions of space Battleships.<p>

The Rain Forest Wars was fought by Brazil leading UNSC forces and Venezuela and Colombia leading Koslovic forces. China, North Korea and Vietnam fought against Japan in the Yellow Sea War, which in contrast to the Amazonian wars was fought over sea.

Other smaller conflicts were fought on the Middle East, who's countries hadn't decided on who to support, but were unfortunately torn by resulting wars from the huge political unrest of the planet.

****2109-2113 ****

The Amazon was the setting for the Rain Forest wars which were fought using strong ground troop assaults with air support. These wars lasted up to the year 2112 when UNSC troops marched into Bogotá, Colombia the last remaining Koslovic stronghold in Latin America.

The Yellow Sea War, not ironically was fought over the Yellow Sea and the Japan Sea. China and North Korea fought against the Japanese on the seas up to the year 2111 when China declared peace against UNSC forces and backed out of the war. Vietnam, who hadn't actively participated in the war, but received heavy losses backed out too. North Korea fought for two more years until Japan finally took over the country, with the support of the locals, by the mid-2113.

Russia, who anticipated the losses, also began creating their own interplanetary Battleships to match UNSC forces.

****2114**

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> Following the Rain Forest and Yellow Sea Wars, UNSC forces turned to negotiating a treaty with the remaining Koslovic nations. Russia abandoned the ideals it had defended so strongly and joined UNSC forces. Terrorist groups, who had been awarded state of the art Warships by Russia felt betrayed and rebelled against the UNSC.<p>

****2115 ****

With most Russian funded colonies feeling betrayed by the motherland, a large rebel group supported by wealthy investors and Russian commanders who had been placed in charge of Russian Battleships declared war against UNSC forces. These rebel group took it's time to plan their operations and movements carefully. The first battle was fought in between asteroids of the asteroid belt. The rebels totally dominated an overconfident UNSC force.

****2116****

The UNSC blindly retaliated over the first half of the year 2116 and lost several other key battles that pushed the momentum in favor of the rebel groups.

****2117****

A series of lightning strikes against UNSC forces over Mars pushed the UNSC forces to attack the land based rebel groups on Martian land. Scientists had long modified the Martian atmosphere to allow Humans to freely breathe it, so the UNSC forces approved the first extra-terrestrial deployment of Marines near the Argyre Planitia. The campaign was an unqualified success. The UNSC ground forces overrun the rebel groups in a few weeks. As a result, future military

doctrine favored large contingents of Marines for ground assaults and ship-boarding actions.

**2118-2125

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> Rebel forces hid for five years after their massive losses they received from a unified, massive and very powerful UNSC military. After the successful Marine deployment on Mars and the following ship-boarding actions and the take of Io, a rebel stronghold, which were backed by a strong propaganda tactic and mottos recruitment drives became enormously successful.<p>

During the peaceful first half of the 20s, the UNSC used the time to organize the extra governmental organizations that were under their command (CIA, HS, KGB, MI6, US Army, US Navy, etc). They where divided into organizations: UNSC Army (the army, the navy and the air force), the Office of Homeland Security (in charge of protecting planet Earth), the Office of Warfare Intelligence, (in charge of battle tactics and military technology), and the Office of Covert Intelligence and Ops, (which would be in charge of top secret governmental operations and investigations), and the Office of Naval Intelligence (a cover up for the OCIO to operate freely and unrestricted.)

2126-2141

The campaign against rebel forces would prove slow and wary. Rebels hid all across the solar system, making them hard to reach. Finding rebel bases and such never was a problem, but space travel was slow. It took UNSC vessels around three weeks to reach Mars and five more to reach Jupiter. Sometimes the rebels hid among the asteroid belt and it always proved a tricky task to eliminate them. During this decade, military activity was high. But Earth and its industrial colonies were at peace, most rebel activity took place around inactive regions.

By the end of the 30s, rebel forces were a rare sight. The massive UNSC Army was pursuing dust and shadows. The cost was massive, so by the 40s the United Nations Space Command dropped the costly campaign.

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>2135-2160: THE FIRST COLONIES

A unified Earth government was formed in the wake of the conflicts of 216. Now, the victors were forced to deal with a less obvious but equally serious: overpopulation and a massive military that had no enemy to fight. Overpopulation threatened to destabilize the fragile stability UNSC forces had achieved in the past decades. During the decade of the rebellion, Earth had time to reestablish itself and its economy once again sparked to life. But South America never quite recovered after the Rain Forest War. Huge causalities and bombardment of cities, towns and villages had left behind the ashes. The fragile ecosystem of the Amazons had collapsed, the delicate Latin economy was lost, and famine swept South America.

The UNSC acted quickly in aid of these troubling nations. The Amazon forest, with the intense collaboration of scientists from all over the world, was saved, but not without some big damages to it. By the

mid 40s South America looked better and better and was clearly steered in the right direction. That allowed the UNSC to address other important matters such as overpopulation and their army which had been inactive for 5 years.

****2145****

For the first time in history human governments, the UNSC, decided to build civilian colonies. The first civilian colony had been promised to the public by the start of the century, on Mars. But between tensions and wars, there was no time for it. But in the year 2145, the construction of a city on Martian surface officially began.

****2146-2149****

With the first areas of the city built, around thirty million men from all over the world were transported with help of the UNSC military to Mars. The operation was flawless, and life in the new city, Fujikawa, named after the brilliant architect who planned the city, Haruko Fujikawa.

****2150****

Following the success of Fujikawa, New Pittsburgh, planned by Sam Wells and Sebastian Rockefeller began construction several hundred miles from Fujikawa on Martian soil. Several other men became interested in developing colonies on the Jovian moons, but the UNSC denied them permission to build there. Using its power, the UNSC forced upon other nations the take of the Jovian moons and made them military colonies. Each and every one of the Jovian moon colonies became a military base.

****2151-2158****

With the city finished, another even bigger wave of colonists moved into Fujikawa. And by the mid 50s, with New Pittsburgh finished, over half a million men were living on Martian soil. During this period, several other cities and civilian space stations were built on Mars. By the end of the decade over one billion men lived in Mars, compared to twenty-five billion on Earth.

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>2160-2200 FASTER THAN LIGHT

During this time period, the migration of men to colonial worlds began to calm as overpopulation was quickly and efficiently being dealt with.

With the added human cities, far away from Earth, new faster ways of travel were needed. A team of researchers, physicists, and mathematicians working in secret developed the Shaw-Fujikawa Translight Engine, a practical means of propelling spacecraft across vast interstellar distances. Under command Henry Julian Shaw and Haruko Fujikawa the team, funded by the ONI's deep pockets, invented a new reactor capable of propelling spaceships at higher speeds and giving them the ability to tunnel into 'Slipstream' or 'Slipspace'. In slipstream, the regular laws of physics are bent and twisted allowing faster-than-light travel with relative ease.

One of the particular qualities of Slipstream is its inaccuracy which is caused by an odd 'flexibility' of temporal flow while inside Slipstream. No human scientist is sure as to why travel in this state is not constant, but many theorize that 'eddies' or 'currents' within Slipstream vary and make travel inaccurate. This temporal inconsistency has given military tacticians and strategists fitsâ€"hampering many coordinated attacks.

Another important quality is that while to an outside observer travel may be instantaneous, for those inside Slipstream, it could take them a week or less to travel one light year. This fact, together with the inaccuracy of it has given military strategists troubles and unexpected effects early on. Several times soldiers, eager and ready for battle, would jump into Slipstream only to have to wait a couple of weeks before they engaged the enemy.

Before ever using Slipstream for travel, the UNSC tested it thoroughly to make sure it was ready for travel between stars. By the end of the decade, scientist had made it to Proxima Centauri and back several times already. With the data collected, H. J. Shaw modified the reactor, in name of the defunct Haruko Fujikawa who died in 2189. Shaw's additions to the reactors allowed for even faster travel outside and inside Slipstream.

* * *

>2200-2220 FIRST WAVE
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> The UNSC unveiled the first in a line of colony shipsâ€"and volunteers were in great supply. Conditions on Earth had deteriorated in the face of overpopulation only a decade ago and it threatened to do so again. By the 23rd century population levels had become alarming once again, Earth counted over 40 billion and Mars already went over ten billion mark. <p>Each colony ship was assigned military personnel and escort ships to help better utilize the massive and expensive standing fleets that, in the collapse of armed dissent, were soaking up a great deal of funding and resources.<p>

Because Slipstream travel in this period was still fairly new and expensive, colonists and military personnel faced a strict regimen of physical and mental testing. In theory, only the best-qualified citizens and soldiers were allowed to colonize "nearby" worlds. This was the birth of the Inner Colonies. About two million settlers were sent to colonize.

2221

Human scientists finally construct history's first Artificial Intelligence under the veil of ONI. Many tests are made to measure their independence and the probability of them rebelling or challenging authorities. Once ONI was completely satisfied with their performance and emotional responses, AIs were put to work in ONI's massive databases.

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>2232: THE ODYSSEY
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> The Odyssey launched on January 1, 2262. The lead ship in a fleet of colony vessels, the Odysseyâ€"laden with troops and terraforming gearâ€"spearheaded the colonization of a new world. This sparked the

first big wave of human expansion beyond the confines of the Solar System. Over two billion men and women were on the trip to fully colonize the cities built by the two million settlers who had established the colonies a couple of decades before them.

<p>2257

After a couple of decades of colonization scientific studies uncovered new compounds which were lighter and stronger than any know compound. More importantly, on the year 2257 scientists uncovered a new highly radioactive element with an impressive stability. This new element, named Eurenium, replaced every other radioactive element used in nuclear reactors.

****2283****

After long studies of Eurenium, which besides revealing its destructive power, allowed scientists to witness artificially created nuclear fission. Fission yielded enormous energy levels but was highly unstable and still inappropriate for powering reactors. It was just a matter of time for fission to allow space travel at amazing speeds.

****2287****

ONI finally unveils AI technology. UNSC ships and offices are outfitted with AIs. Their use becomes widespread and facilitates many aspects of UNSC work. To the present date, no civilian AIs have been issued and AI building and constructing is still a secret ONI guards zealously.

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>2290: INNER COLONIES
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> By 2290, the colonization of the Inner Colonies was fully underway. There were 110 human-occupied worlds in various stages of terraforming, and the population burden across human-controlled space was largely stabilized. Over 25 billion colonists had migrated from Earth and Mars.<hr>****2300-2400 THE EXPANSION**

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> Expansion kept on at a rapid pace during the first half of the 24th century. In the year 2352 the UNSC decided to slow down the pace of expansion to concentrate on perfecting the 322 human controlled worlds. <p>Outward expansion slowed down, and the Inner Colonies became a political and economic stronghold, though they relied heavily on raw materials supplied by the Outer Colonies.<p>

****2314****

During the creation of the Outer Colonies several ships carrying several thousand men disappeared after entering Slipstream. The events were quickly addressed by the UNSC and most records of it were destroyed.

The ship appeared several light-years off target and sent a distress signal in all directions. It is speculated that ONI received and recorded the transmissions a couple of years after the events.

****2334**

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> During this period, the planet Reach (orbiting Epsilon Eridani, right on Earth's metaphorical doorstep) became the UNSC's primary Naval yard and training academy. Reach was a major producer of warships and colony vessels, as well as a training ground for covert operatives and Special Forces.<p>

****2341****

It took long, but finally ONI presented a fission reactor to replace fusion reactors on board all military vessels. Private and public spaceships would have to wait a long time to receive their versions of the fission reactor, which was customized to reduce its efficiency. It is speculated that several ONI spaceships were outfitted with fission reactors long before it allowed the military to use them.

****2347-2348****

The rebel insurgence of the Eridanus system took place during these years. After over a century of peace there was finally a real need for a military. The UNSC Army sent their newly outfitted fission vessels and with the increase mobility crushed the opposition. The rebels where easily dealt with, and pushed into the Eridanus Asteroid Belt where they hid from UNSC forces.

****2350****

Delta Wolf was targeted by ONI to be the target for a series of experiments. For over two decades children born in the system where taken by ONI officials and given a mysterious treatment. The families who chose to do this were paid in full all their basic expenses (shelter, food, health and education) if they submitted their children to these programs and agreed not to leave the system.

****2387****

In an almost Roswell like event it is rumored that ONI met with aliens around the system Delta Wolf. Backed by reports of abducted children and sightings of alien aircraft, the rumors and speculation are rampant. In four centuries no other alien related event had ever compared to Roswell. The most highly believed theories deal with alien abductions, but most studies link the abductions to the offspring of children who were part of ONI studies and tests 30 years earlier.

During the year 2387 and 88 a reported one hundred and fourteen children mysteriously disappeared and none were ever seen again.

2. Prologue

****Forgotten Heroes****

****Prologue****

****_0801 Hours, January 26, 2388 (Military Calendar)/ Europa Military Base in orbit around Jupiter_****

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>"Dr. Watts, you are late for our meeting. Surely you wouldn't want to keep us waiting," declared the black man seating in between two other men, all dressed in the same identical uniform, as Watts sat on a chair facing the three men. The room was dimly lit; the only source of light was the insignia of the Office of Naval Intelligence which was carved into the wall behind the three men.<p><p>

"Your ridiculous new security system delayed me. There really isn't any need for it. No one even knows about this facility."

The dark skinned man said nothing, instead he browsed a stack of envelopes he had to his left on the large desk standing between Dr. Watts and the three men. He chose one and handed it to Watts.

"What's this?" Watts didn't open the envelope, but instead waited for the others to explain.

The man to the left spoke, "It's your papers and ID card; you are required to bring them to work everyday. Do not forget them."

Then the man to the right spoke, "Inside are also several folders containing very important information," he explained with intonation on the word important. "The papers in them will brief you on the project you have been assigned too. Its goals, requirements, the time in which we expect you to finish the project and most importantly your budget."

The man in the middle signaled his right hand man to cease and began to speak himself. "You see, Watts. We need security. Anyone could come barging in. What you say is true though, no one knows about our facility and what goes on in Section 0. But we need precautions for your knew project. We need security. Your subjects could decide to run away, the security measures we have installed should prevent that. And with the new security visitors can't go around the complex seeing things that are not supposed to exist."

"I understand. Am I to understand that you have recruited my target subjects?" Bahar Watts was inwardly exited to be able to begin his project.

"Yes, we have recruited the one hundred eleven targets you selected. They are on their way to the facility as we speak. Everything has been set on motion. You'll be surprised. Your subjects' quarters include a playground, just like you ordered, sleeping bunkers, small woods, fields, and a classroom. And right next to the area, overlooking everything is your laboratory. You'll find everything in perfect order."

"Well, I trust you did a good job."

"Ok. If you'll excuse us, we have matters to attend to. You are to inspect our job, and see if there is anything you wish to modify. Also, you should meet your team. They should be waiting for you at the sleeping quarters. There's a map of the area, you can find it from here. Go over everything and we'll meet tomorrow at 0900."

"Will do." With that Bahar got up and walked out into the well lit corridors of the Section 0 complex. A couple of steps up the corridor and a left led him to his destination, Elevator 2. He took his ID out and swiped it to prompt the DNA analyzer to open the elevator door. When he placed his index finger on its glassy surface the machine pinched it and matched his DNA to the one in its database.

"Say your name and PIN out loud," one of Section 0's AIs spoke, he recognized her acute voice immediately.

"Kaspar Bahar Watts, X0-4T6-YP5. Good morning Kris." The elevator doors opened and Bahar entered the cabin. As he swiped his ID card to access the elevator's controls he conversed with Kris. "So, what have you been up to lately?"

"Well, don't you know?"

"Yes, we're finally starting the GS project." She quickly replied that that wasn't exactly it. "Well, then I don't think I know what you are talking about." He finished with the elevator's touch screen and it began to descend into the depths of the high security complex.

"I've been appointed to your team! I have full access to every single mainframe and computer in the building so I can follow you around."

"So you're my new personal assistant." Kris's hologram nodded. "Well, it's a pleasure. Do you want to get started?" She nodded again and agreed. "Well, I need you to go over the classroom materials and compare it to _classdetail.doc_ on my desk computer."

Just when Kris's hologram faded the elevator came to a silent stop, the doors opened and they revealed what they had been hiding. A jungle. There was a green, living, forest behind the elevator doors, a small building to the left with civilian Warthogs, and a forest path that zigzagged in between the trees. This was to be his home for a long time; a hundred acres forest and grasslands located four hundred meters underground.

He jumped into a Warthog, almost instantly the engine roared on and Kris spoke up, "Where to?"

"You know."

"I do."

3. Chapter One

****Forgotten Heroes****

****Chapter One****

1224 Hours, January 27, 2388 (Military Calendar)/ Europa Military Base in orbit around Jupiter****

Dr. Watts rode up the elevator that had taken him down to his "lab" yesterday. He had a meeting with Chief Officer Tarantino, who would

supervise the training of his subjects. Kaspar Watts was wearing a long white leather vest that looked like a really fancy scientist outfit. Dr. Watts wore black leather gloves and shoes, a white button shirt with chic designs, and black pants. He used glasses because of his nearsightedness; Kaspar had refused to undergo treatment and wanted to use glasses. Even then, he bought luxurious glasses. His outfit was a perfect image of his personality. He was a bit of a show-off, competitive and on top of his work, eccentric and nothing like the scientist stereotype.

The elevator stopped on section 1, floor 12, and his "lab" was on 0-5, a floor just for him on the top secret Section 0 of the top secret base on the top secret UNSC division. He found it really hilarious. Was there really a need for a top secret division inside a top secret base of a top secret organization?

Leaving those thoughts aside, he made his way into the conveyor belt and walked all the way to the end of the long hallway. He opened the door marked "A5 Meeting Room". Inside, officer Tarantino, a short aged man, was waiting for him. Tarantino had

"Early, that is a good sign in scientists working for OCIO. If you make the habit of being early, you'll have a long prosperous career working for ONI. I must add, you look way too flashy, certainly not the type of person who would normally conduct this experiment." The Chief Officer clearly knew about ONI's secrets and it was possible that during his "active" years he conducted ONI's operations on Delta Wolf.

"So you have been briefed about the experiments already?" The old officer nodded. "I like this outfit. Is there anything wrong about it?"

"No. I just said it looks flashy. It does," Chief Officer Tarantino responded.

"Well, we are not here to discuss fashion." They skipped the formal introductions, they already knew who each other was, and got to work. "Shall we get to it?"

"Of course." Dr. Watts sat on the other side of the table and activated the Holographic Imaging Device. He connected his computer to it and began his presentation.

"I was going to give you a basic briefing of the experiments, but since you've already been briefed, there's no point to it. So let's discuss the routine. What do you have in mind?"

"Well, I was informed that part of the daily routine will be attending to class. So my I shaped the schedule and left a couple of hours for class time."

"Good. What have you planned for your routine?"

"I'll start only with all types of cardiovascular drills, and if they are as gifted as I have been informed, then I hope to do some military drills in a month or two."

"I assure you that the subjects are just as you have been informed. How long do you think it will take until everyone of the subjects has

adjusted to the rigorous training?"

"They should adapt in six months. Why do you ask?"

"When you feel they are all ready, they are to be given shots weekly. I'll handle it; you just tell me when they are ready."

"Ok. What are the shots for? They won't be injected HDE, it would be stupid."

"Idiotic, actually. The shots will provide amino acids, proteins, nutrients, vitamins, and minerals, all those things to ensure proper growth, physical and mental. We have to make their body and mind grow strong for the genetic treatments."

"I understand. I only have a rough schedule done though; do you have a map of their training area so that I can plan the routine in a more detailed manner?"

Dr. Watts showed him a holographic map of the lab, the building, the forest and the playground. They talked about minor details such as the diet of the subjects, how hard they could and should be pushed, the lessons they would take and such.

Kaspar looked at his watch as saw it was already past one, he had a meeting. " Well, I sorry to have to cut the meeting short. If you'll excuse me, Officer Tarantino, I must go; I have another meeting to attend to. These ONI officers expect me to be on time even though they change meeting times anytime they want and whenever they want."

"Well, that's the way with them. No one gets around that."

They shook hands and exchanged their goodbyes. Once they made it to the elevators on the far end of the hallway, they shook hands once more and parted ways.

4. Chapter Two

****Forgotten Heroes****

****Chapter Two****

****_1048 Hours, Monday January 29, 2388 (Military Calendar)/ Europa Military Base in orbit around Jupiter_****

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"They are all here now. They all look disoriented, better clear things out for them." An AI spoke up.

A dark skinned man spoke up in response to the message. "Thanks Jet. Chief Tarantino will be there in a moment." He turned to talk to Chief Tarantino, who he had been speaking with.

"I don't think he is doing anything that goes against your motives and goals, Rogers."

Rogers's stern emotionless look was always present on his face. He rarely smiled, or laughed or showed emotion. "Good. Remember, you have been assigned for several reasons. We trust you, Warren. You are past your time, you never made it while you were active. Now it's your chance to make it as an Officer."

"I know. I'll keep a good eye on him. Everything he does to the children is through me anyways. It shouldn't be hard at all, Colonel."

"Excellent. Stay in touch." The colonel shook hands with Tarantino and left the room.

Tarantino stayed for a couple of seconds, contemplating. This was his chance to make it, his chance to finish what he had led and supported during his active time in the UNSC Military. He fixed his shirt and tucked it in nicely before walking out into the podium.

The entire room was well lit. He looked around and made a vague count of the children, over a hundred. There appeared to be half the number of trainers, and a few men who stood in each exit. The kids stopped whining and crying at the order of their trainers. Tarantino noticed one kid who hadn't been crying or whining. The kid seemed to have a clear idea of what was going on. He probably was one of the oldest kids, about nine or ten years old. The kid had a strong and angry look on his face, and looked strait at him.

* * *

>The man who stood on the platform cleared his throat and began speaking. "Welcome, children. You might not know what is going on right now. That is all right. All you need to know is that this is your new home. Your lives will change from this day forward and you will not get to see your family anymore." Some of the kids had begun crying and whining again, the awful men in army clothing were calming them and threatening them. He kept looking strait at the man who was giving the speech. He was the one who had taken them away from home.
<p>That old man who tried to comfort them was the cause of all their pain and suffering. Once all the kids were quiet, he began talking again. "You will no longer play with other kids your age, or fool around. All of you will go through the same rigorous training and academic agenda. While you might not understand this right now I'll say it anyway. You will grow to be the future of the UNSC Army. You will grow to be feared and respected by both your allies and your enemies. You will be stronger and smarter than anyone else. You will grow to be great soldiers one day. You will one day grow and understand everything, and when that day comes you'll be ready to take the tasks that will be presented to you head on." The old man looked at him for a while.<p>

He hated that man. He had taken away his family and friends. He had and would make his life miserable for the years to come. He didn't seem like a bad man, though.

* * *

>"That is all. Dismissed. Take the children to their barracks to spend the night. Tomorrow we begin training." Tarantino had a look of the kid once more before leaving the auditory room. He memorized the

kid's seat. <p>Once he was back on the room behind the auditory, where he had talked to the colonel, he approached a computer panel on a wall.<p>

"Jet?"

The AI responded, "What is it?"

"I want to find out about one of the kids in the program. Show me a picture of the auditory."

A video feed from a security camera appeared on screen. He identified the kid and marked his face on the screen. "That one. Find everything about him."

A second or two later Jet showed the child's profile. "Name, Trahaearn Garth. He is ten years old. He was born in Ruffen City on the system Delta Wolf. His father died of unknown causes, according to public records. ONI records indicate he died from the same cause, a peculiar heart attack. The file describes other similar cases. They are all related to ONI experiments on the 50s."

"That bastard. He knew and kept it from me. What else?"

"The files describe it as heart failure due to excessive growth. It looks like ONI experimented on them as kidsâ€|"

"I know that. What else?"

"Apparently the heart grew abnormally in some cases and that caused it to stop functioning."

Damn those ONI bastards, they always kept secrets from everyone. They didn't trust him. They really only trusted that he would do the job. "What was his name again?"

"Trahaearn Garth. A name of welsh origin. It means strong as iron."

"What about his ID number?"

"Garth-022."

"Thank you. That was all."

Chief Tarantino got up and left the room. He made his through a couple of backstage rooms before making it to the hallway. There he took a left and then another left and began making his way down the long main hallway of section 1, floor 15.

He made it to the elevator and waited a few seconds for it to arrive. He complied with the usual security measures and took the elevator down to 0-5.

5. Chapter Three

****Forgotten Heroes****

****Chapter Three****

**_0448 Hours, Tuesday January 30, 2388 (Military Calendar)/ Europa
Military Base in orbit around Jupiter_**

* * *

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Trahaearn was wide awake and already ready for their instructors to shovel them out and make them run and exercise excessively. He had pictured it in his mind, all the kids moving out of the barracks to the field fearing the electric shock they would receive if the instructors saw them slacking off. Those men would make them run for miles and miles, and make sore and tired and exhausted.

He had spent all his time awake picturing it. He jumped down from his cot and fell on the hard cold cement floor. He looked around; everyone appeared to be sleeping in their bed. A few feet away, in between two cots, a small opening led to the bathroom.

He felt the need to pee, so he made his way into one of the little gray stalls. Once he was finished, he washed his hands on the sink.

Trahaearn looked at himself in the mirror. He looked sleepy, so he wet his hair and face with his hands. His long curvy dark blonde hair stuck to his head as it got wet. When he felt awake, he looked at his green eyes for a while before returning to bed.

Back in the main corridor of their barracks, the voice of a young girl called him softly. "Hey. Come here." Trahaearn turned and looked for the girl. He spotted her and she waived at him, signaling him to walk to her. The girl had long brown hair and smooth skin, she looked about his age.

"Hi. I'm Trahaearn." The girl sat against the wall, and Trahaearn sat besides her on the other side of the bed.

"Duscha. Why are you up this early?"

"I don't know. I woke up. Why are you up?"

"You woke me up."

Trahaearn figured he really made a bit of noise when going to the bathroom so he apologized. "Sorry to wake you."

"It's ok; I wake up early anyways, but not this early." They sat in silence for a short while, not an uncomfortable silence, just a brief pause in the conversation. Duscha spoke up again in a half whispered voice, "When do you think they will come for us?"

"In five minutes or so, I guess."

"I don't want to go. I wish I'd be home with my family, but they won't let us. I don't think they ever will." She was right at that. They never would allow them to go home, and they would never even make it near the system Delta Wolf for the rest of their lives.

"I don't think so. I don't think our parents know we are here either."

We were abducted by the ONI."

Duscha seemed surprised, "The ONI, how can you be so certain? They wouldn't be so interested in us kids."

"Who else would kidnap so many children? I'm sure it is the ONI. I've heard a lot of things from my mother of them. They do not obey the rules. ONI does whatever it pleases, however it pleases, wherever it pleases, and whenever it pleases." Trahaearn described ONI in the same manner one describes legends and myths. With an intonation that makes it look like ONI is something to fear and respect.

"What do you think they will do with us?"

"Didn't you hear the man talking to us yesterday? He said we would be soldiers. I guess that we will exercise, run and be trained to be soldiers. I don't like it. We don't have a choice either."

They sat in silence for a moment, each contemplating and imagining what their future held for them. They both imagined it was their destiny to become great soldiers and save the world. They weren't innocent, they both knew the world wasn't a fairytale, but they were still children.

A large number of feet were walking towards their barracks. It was probably their instructors who came to wake them up. "I better get to my bed."

"Yeah, fake you were sleeping."

Trahaearn ran to his bed and covered himself with his bed sheets. The main door opened and in came a large number of men, making a racket to wake the children up. The men yelled and hit the metal supports of their beds to make noise and wake everyone.

In thirty seconds all the children were rushed down the corridor and into a large bathroom at the far end of the barracks. Those who lagged behind or refused to cooperate were shocked with a light tazer to make them move.

Everyone, girls and boys were shoved into a large room with sprinklers on the ceiling. A tall man walked in and yelled orders to them after everyone was inside. "Do exactly as you are told. Those who choose not to will be punished! If you do not hear the instructions, just follow the group, someone will have heard the instructions. Now, everyone will take off their old clothes and throw them into the metal cabinets on the wall. Take off every last piece of clothes, no underwear! Now, you will be showered with cold water, then it will warm and soapy. After you will be rinsed in cold water again, then lukewarm water mixed with shampoo. Finally you will be rinsed in cold water.

"Once you are clean, proceed to the next room and dry yourself with a towel. Leave the towel in one of the towel disposal bins and proceed to your bed, where your new clothes will be waiting for you. You have ten minutes to dry up, get dressed and to make it outside where I will be waiting for you. Remember, failure to comply will result in punishment!"

The tall man turned around and walked out closing the doors behind

him. Everyone did as ordered and began taking off their clothes. Trahaearn was quick to do so, he hated his instructors and he didn't want to give them the pleasure of punishing him.

Duscha was nearby and hesitated when taking off her clothes. Trahaearn; already naked like few of them approached her, "You need to get naked Duscha. Don't give them a chance to punish you."

Duscha tried to avoid looking at him, "I can't. I won't." She finally took her underwear off, but she couldn't stop covering herself.

When the water began falling down, only a few kids hadn't taken off their clothes but they all did after it got wet. The water turned warmer and began feeling soapy. Duscha had no choice but to stop covering herself and rub the soap all over.

The water turned cold again and then warm and finally cold. Trahaearn washed off all the shampoo and soap off and proceeded to dry himself. He followed the rules down to the last letter and was the first one to get dressed and step outside.

Only three kids arrived late. The man that had given them the speech last night was there besides the tall man who had given them orders in the bathroom.

The old man with white and receding hair spoke up, "Welcome. I am Chief Officer Tarantino. If any of you would want to talk to me, you will address me as such, with respect and courtesy. Today we will begin doing a short lap. Private Chief Ingram," the tall man, "will guide you. Follow him. Do not lag behind. We will not tolerate slackers!"

The short lap turned to be a two mile trot, but, as they would find out, it really was a short jog after all. They all arrived back to where Officer Tarantino was waiting for them.

Chief Officer Tarantino announced they would do calisthenics and stretching now and a few kids whined. They were shocked accordingly.

After some tiresome exercises, Tarantino announce that push ups would be their last exercise. All the kids were tired and every last muscle in them ached and begged for rest. "We will do twenty five push ups. If anyone, and I mean anyone, does a poor job or gets tired we will begin from zero." Twenty five push ups were all they had to do. In practice, they did one hundred and seven. Trahaearn counter them.

"Good! Excellent work out! Now, everyone follow Private Chief Ingram for a tiny jog to the classroom where you will get breakfast."

At the sound of that, all the children got up and were apt to follow Private Ingram all the way to the classroom.

The breakfast they received made them full, but wasn't a real breakfast. They were served with MREs, standard military food packets, as they were told. They opened their packets, which included smaller plastic bags. One said Dairy Milk Shake, and the other held crackers. Another small bag came with a pill, which instructions told them to drop into the Dairy Milk Shake. Trahaearn followed

instructions and was surprised as the drink cooled in his hands. He opened the crackers and ate breakfast, which he found tastier than most children.

Once every child had finished, a man passed along with a tray and left with the trash. All their trainers filed out of the room and the large HID in the middle of the room sparkled to life. An AI appeared on the display.

"Welcome to class children. I will be your teacher. You can call me Kris."

6. Chapter Four

****Forgotten Heroes****

****Chapter Three****

****_0448 Hours, Wednesday March 20, 2388 (Military Calendar)/ Epsilon Eridani System, ONI Section 0, in orbit around planet Reach_****

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"Welcome Dr. Watts."

"Good day, Colonel Tranter."

The colonel had gotten up from his desk to greet Kaspar Watts. They shook hands, and the colonel offered Dr. Watts a seat.

The room was well lit and decorated. A few certificates stood on the wall behind the colonel's desk, there were several abstract paintings on the side walls. The floor and walls were rocky, giving the room a castle feeling. The whole Section 0 Space Station was like that. On the roof, were several hanging pots with artificial vines. The colonel's desk and chairs stood on a Persian style carpet.

"I have read your reports, and I must say that I'm pleased. It appears that Chief Officer Tarantino is doing a good job. I must add though, I haven't received any reports on your investigation."

"Everything is going as planned. The procedure will be prepared before they are ready for it. The GS project is still on its early stages. It should be ready in two years."

"Good. Talk to Chief Tarantino, I want the children to be ready in two years. The earlier the Genome Soldiers project takes place, the faster you begin working on the real project."

"I will see to that. There's no need to worry, the children are showing amazing results and response to the training. They will enter Stage 2 of their training in a few months."

"Good. Is that all?"

"Yes, everything else is detailed on the report."

"Ok. I wanted to talk to you about another project." The colonel switched on the HID and displayed an image of a black military armor.

"I must say I am intrigued."

"This armor was designed to be used by Marines. The armor itself weighs one hundred pounds. Imagine going to war with one hundred pounds, it is just too much weight to carry, soldier these days need mobility and flexibility, something this armor cannot give them. The project was scrapped, but now I need you to retake it, this armor could be put to use."

"I see, I'll take the project."

"Good, it's all on this disk." Colonel Tranter took a data disk and gave it to Dr. Watts. "Do whatever changes necessary to adjust your main project, but try not to sacrifice the protection it offers against armor piercing bullets. You'll be surprised with its toughness and durability when you read the data from the experimentation we did on it."

"I'll see what I can do with it. The SPARTAN project will remain my main project nonetheless."

"Yes, the SPARTAN project is our top priority; regard this project as a personal one. I trust you'll do a good job."

"I will."

"Well, I have to attend a meeting. Apparently, ONI has contacted aliens on this system and on the Delta Wolf system. We have to discuss what to say to the public."

"Well, it's your motto and I don't blame you. 'We don't comment on rumors and speculation'. It always works."

"Sure does."

Dr. Watts shook hands with the colonel one more time and left the room. He made his way through the castle like space station until he reached the hangar.

He checked his watch, still twenty minutes to lift-off. Dr. Watts boarded his ride to Europa and patiently waited for the ship to take off.

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7. Chapter Five

****Forgotten Heroes****

****Chapter Five****

****_0448 Hours, Monday, October 7, 2388 (Military Calendar)/ Europa**

Military Base in orbit around Jupiter_**

For the first few months of training their routines didn't change much. They were always doing exercise, taking classes, or resting at the barracks. Every morning they would shower, warm up, take a hike through the nearby woods, and then do some real calisthenics and strengthening exercises before going to class. After class they would do military drills, more exercise to the point until their bodies couldn't stand it any longer. They then took a shower, and were ordered to rest at the barracks for the night. The training had taken the same daily routine for few months they had been in training.

Trahaearn had befriended a couple of kids and they had forced other children out of their beds so they got the last beds of the barracks. He slept on the bed closest to the showers, and farthest from the entrance. Duscha Collins slept above him, Francesco Maldini slept on the other side of the hall; the barracks were a long narrow path with beds on the side. Nicholas Keith slept above Frankie; they called him Keith.

Trahaearn made his way to the training grounds after the morning bath with Frankie. They were usually the first out of the baths and ready for training. Training began for them even though the rest of the children were still getting dressed. Trahaearn and Frankie were ordered to do sets of 15 pus-ups and 20 sit-ups in quick successions until everyone arrived. The children were told to imitate them as they arrived.

When all the kids were ready and filed up, Chief Officer Tarantino spoke up. "I have a special announcement to make. Today we will begin a new training, you will be taught battle tactics and movements for the first time. Today we will skip class to go over tactics. Now, take a long hike and then do calisthenics and strength training. After you will have breakfast as I teach you basic tactics."

After their long hike and training were over they were all taken into a large classroom they had never been into. It was located on the second floor of a large building they had never been into before, it seemed as if it had not been there before, its floor was made of glass and under it was a large maze. The children were given a seat and breakfast before Chief Officer Tarantino began their class.

"Today we will begin a new kind of training. You will begin playing Paintball, an old sport that was very popular back on Earth, a couple of centuries ago." Tarantino picked up what looked like a gun from a nearby desk. It was rather odd, with a tank on its rear end, a weird plastic bay above it, and a long barrel. "This is a paintball marker. It uses compressed hydrogen to shoot paint filled bullets at high speeds; getting hit by one of these hurts."

He readied the gun and aimed just above the children, some flinched as he began shooting the wall behind them. Red paint was left on the wall and lightly splattered nearby children. Both the gun and the paintballs made a loud noise when they were shot and when they hit their target. "This is not a toy. Back in the days, it was only sold to adults. This modified version of a paintball marker shoots bullets far more accurately and harder than old models. Everything has been redesigned. The paint can only be removed with a special spray to

prevent cheating. The guns can also be deactivated externally, to prevent those who have been tagged from shooting other players."

"As you might have guessed already, the point of the game is to tag, hit, shoot, whatever you wish to call it, the opposing team. Whoever ends with live members wins, or if time runs out before some one wins, teams get only a third of the points. Losers get no points. Any questions?"

Francesco raised his hand and spoke up, "Sir, if no one wins in a tie, why do tied teams get points?"

"It is utterly unacceptable to be rewarded for mediocrity, but preventing the other team from winning is worth something."

Trahaearn, following Frankie's lead spoke up, "Sir." He paused to get Chief Officer Tarantino's approval, "Yes, but you cannot reward cowardice. If I just hide in a bunker it would be unacceptable to be awarded points for it."

Another kid spoke up and supported both Frankie and Trahaearn. A couple more spoke against and in favor. "Calm down!" he paused to calm down, "I will meet with your trainers and discuss this. That will be it; we will decide what to do." He walked over to a side of the room and opened a door. P. C. Corporal Ono followed him. He was new and the only kid who knew his name where those who had been able to read his nametag. "This is Private Chief Corporal Ono, he will be teaching you moves that will be helpful for you. A group will go down with him, others will be appointed to other tasks while they are with him. Garth-022," Trahaearn got up, "Maldini-047" |"

Trahaearn didn't catch anymore names as he was already going down into the maze. From downstairs he watched as Frankie, young Johnny who was only seven, Tyler, Zoe, one young boy he didn't know by name, another he quite didn't even recognize, Luis who beat everyone to first place in sprints, Angelina, and Dominic were the only ones to follow Trahaearn downstairs into the maze. Private Ono joined them downstairs and led them into an open area in the maze.

"First I'll teach you how to move. The most important rule in warfare is that unless you want to be seen, you should be invincible. Move in silence, but move swiftly. This is how it should be done." Private Ono bent his back and ran softly with his knees slightly bent, even though he was running, his feet made no noise as they hit the floor. He stopped at ten meters into the maze and turned around, "Now you do it. Step lightly, soft like feathers, but move. You have to be fast."

He watched as the children ran like he had. "Good. Some of you can bend even lower. Most of you hit the ground when running. You are not just moving, you must glide, like this." He did it again and watched them as they did the drill several times. "Of course, if you need to get somewhere fast this is not the optimal way to do it. Moving like this provides optimum speed and agility while moving with stealth. Try and step softly, glide. Do it a couple more times."

After that, they followed Private Ono to a long tunnel with few door like openings on its walls. One of them led to another hallway; Private Ono stopped right besides it. "Wall hugging. It is a very

basic and old military tactic. From the very beginnings of urban warfare this has been taught in every military. The wall is your friend, stick to the sides of a room. Standing in the middle of a room is asking to be seen. Just like walking down the middle of a street." Ono showed them how to do it while he explained it, "You have to move close to the wall without touching it. When approaching corners, you lean yourself against the wall and look around the corner with your head. Use the corner as cover, and remember that walls are your friends. Next is the SWAT Turn, a highly useful maneuver in close quarters combat. You move into the corner and turn as you move past it, and finish by quietly hugging the other corner. This should be fast and silent. Now, do this drill, hug the wall, peak around the corner and do a SWAT Turn."

Next Private Ono showed them how to land silently, how to efficiently roll, dive and slide. He showed them how to hide behind bunkers and efficient ways to peak around a hot corner. All of the kids would have to train hard to master the moves Private Ono taught them.

The other children where showed the more advanced rules and situations in Paintball, how to wear paintball equipment, how to shoot with a paintball marker, basic squad based tactics, a more advanced lesson on moving like a SWAT and SEALs team. Both, as the children were taught, were highly efficient squads with superior ability that dominated their enemies with the most advanced tactics, weapons and technologies of the 20th and 21st Centuries. When the kids finished their lesson they were taken by another trainer someplace else within the building so as to have every group receive every lesson.

After a long day of training, the children found themselves in the second floor room where they had been after their morning calisthenics for a second time. Their trainers had a small lunch for them, and Officer Tarantino waited to give further instructions.

"I hope you all remember what you have learned today, as you will have to apply it the rest of this week. You will all be appointed into teams and there will be a small tourney Tuesday through Friday. Saturday and Sunday you will attend class, which you won't this week, and receive some more trainings. Monday we will repeat a more advanced version of this and change teams for another tourney next week."

"Now, I will give you all a new identification number, a letter followed by two digit name number. Those of you with the same letters will be teammates for the tournament."

Chief Officer Tarantino proceeded to list out loud their new identification numbers. After every team had assembled in different areas of the large room, each team was assigned a trainer that would watch over them as they walked around the maze to familiarize themselves with it.

8. Chapter Six

****Forgotten Heroes****

****Chapter Six****

0546 Hours, Sunday, October 13, 2388 (Military Calendar)/ Epsilon Eridani System, ONI Section 0, in orbit around planet Reach

"Welcome Dr. Watts."

"Good day, Colonel Tranter." They were meeting early in the morning, just like Watts' last time on planet Reach, six months ago.

"Take a seat, Watts." Kaspar Watts gave Colonel Tranter a manila folder, filled with papers, and discs. "How has it been?"

"Tiring. Just exhausting. But it was worth it. The children began Stage 2 fifty four days ago, and were scheduled to begin Stage 3 in six months."

"So you plan to do the surgeries in two years?"

"Yes. We are hopeful, since the children have been responding positively to the drugs. They do not know about them, anyway. They just began their training on basic warfare this past week. It is certainly shaping up to be a great experiment. The SPARTAN project will most likely benefit hugely."

"Those are great news." The Colonel looked into the manila folder.

"Oh, take the blue disk."

"This one?" Watts nodded and the Colonel inserted the disc into his HID. The same black armor appeared on screen. "So, what do you have for me?"

"Project Thor. The armor itself should weigh about 223 pounds. The GS subjects will be able to efficiently carry that weight, with no problems. The armor has a soft skeleton system to help the user carry its weight, that way; soldiers will only feel as if they are carrying around 60 pounds around." All the while, the Colonel looked impressed. "I have also added a tactical display to the helmet, and a small computer capable of harboring simple AIs. Each armor will have its own unique AI, which will interact with the user to aid him communicate with others, remind him of objectives, control his display to feature information on the status of his armor, where's north, where's his objective, and almost any information a soldier could need in battle. You will also find that this armor will provide nearly double the amount of protection, the extra aid of carrying an AI, oxygen supplies to last a soldier 60 minutes; the let down is that it carries a 45 increase on its price tag. I think it is worth it."

"I will have my technicians go over it; you know that I am not as adept in this as you are. If it is as you say it is, we will have it produced. You must understand that due to the nature of the GS project, we can't produce them early, from risk of overproduction."

"I understand."

"Well, after that brief introduction to the armor, it will most likely be placed into production."

Watts shifted himself in his chair to get more comfortable, he certainly had gotten on the good side of the Colonel. "Yes. The only issue right now is the endoskeleton. I am working on it, and have had some big breakthroughs in recent days, but I'm not confident it should be tested for production as of yet. Every thing else is made of currently existing technology."

"That should not be an issue. There is still time to do the right test procedures and manufacturing. The Genome Soldiers will not be ready for this armor until a year after the surgeries, when they have fully grown. That's the idea, is it not?"

This was the only shortcoming that had gotten in Dr. Watts project. "Actually, no. Lab experiments and my investigation have led me to believe that the children will grow for about two to three years after the surgeries, which means that their growth must be monitored, so they can not abandon their training until then."

"That will not be a big problem right? ONI will fund your project all the way. This gets the organization on the good side with the UNSC and the people. Imagine when all these ONI trained soldiers save the day. Oh, it will remove the doubt the people have on this institution. Not that we really care, butâ€¦"

"I understand."

The Colonel got up, "Well, I have to leave. I have a breakfast scheduled this morning. You can come with me; I'll introduce you to other important men in the organization. That way you'll win the favor of them."

Colonel Tranter and Dr. Watts arrived late to the breakfast. Tranter excused himself and presented Dr. Watts. Most of the men were eager to find out as much as they could about the GS project and its future successor. Only a few of them were clearly non-interested, or did not approve of the situation, but it is the majority that matters, and the majority was interested.

9. Chapter Seven

****Forgotten Heroes****

****Chapter Seven****

1430 Hours, Tuesday, October 15, 2388 (Military Calendar)/ Europa Military Base in orbit around Jupiter****

Duscha, Frankie and Keith were all assigned to his six man team. It was his to command. He called the shots. Luis Miguel Caballero, the fast boy, and Jenny Alba were also assigned to him. This was, as Officer Tarantino told them, their group for the rest of their training. There would be no changing teams. Soon, everyone would end up hating Trahaearn's team; they were winners and couldn't help it. Luis and Johana, nicknamed Jo, both took a bunker close to the bathrooms, further down the line from their old beds. Although they were only six, they bullied other children and took eight bunks for themselves. Duscha and Keith took the beds closest to the bathrooms, on opposite sides; the upper beds of each side were used as storage

for them. Trahaearn took an upper bunker down the line from Duscha, and under him slept Jo, across were Frankie and Luis.

The tournament had already started, but Trahaearn's team had not yet played anyone. The last week, Trahaearn's team had gotten up to a bad start, but he pulled it together and they came in second. He was determined to win this time around, and his team could not have been better. Teams had been assigned on Saturday, so they had time to practice on Sunday and Monday.

As the clock signaled 1430 hours a bell rang, signaling the start of the next match. His team, consisting of members F-01 through F-06, was matched up against team K. While they went down, Trahaearn recognized Kenny, one of the youngest around, and Tyler, who had been with him on training day, and as Trahaearn would later confirm, was a good player.

When both teams were ready, inside their respective bases, the match begun. Trahaearn led Luis and Jo through the middle, Keith and Duscha took the left; all the while Frankie, great at sneaking around, snaked his way around the left. It was not long before his team took the lead as Trahaearn himself shot an opponent.

A couple of minutes later it became clear that the match was going nowhere. They needed a drastic change in tactics. Frankie was still making his way unseen, while Luis, Jo, Keith and Duscha met with Trahaearn behind a bunker. "Jo, Luis and Duscha, you cover; but be sure to keep listening to what I say." He turned to Keith. "You command the group. I'll go ahead shooting everything in my path. They'll take me down, but I'll take as many of them as I can. This will cause confusion among them, probably enough for you to see where everyone is, and act upon it. Frankie should get a break too."

"You are crazy, but it should work. Just get as many of them as you can."

"I will."

Just then Trahaearn got up and ran towards the left wall. As he took cover he heard the paintballs splatter against nearby object. Breathing deeply he sprinted out of cover and down parallel to the wall. More shots directed at his position. When he found cover, he took it. Just then he heard another opponent go down. He took his chances and looked above his cover. Reacting on an instant he opened fire at the other team, who quickly took notice of him and followed suit. He was out, but so were three others from the other team. His team had four players and a tactical advantage, not only with Frankie, but because his actions had forced the other team to reveal their position. The opposing team had another disadvantage, in numbers.

Trahaearn, following instructions ran to the nearest exit, there he climbed up a set of stairs and into the room with the glass floor. Officer Tarantino looked at him as he took seat behind a desk with what appeared to be a look of approval.

The desk had a touch screen that allowed him to see through the cameras that had been placed around the maze, it allowed him to watch all the action, and it got him thinking. What if they could train themselves to pass on information about the battle field and the

enemies to position between the 'dead' and the 'active' members? His mind blocked of the game, and shortly afterwards the match was over; they had won their first one of many. It would be a long streak of victories for them before anyone beat them.

End
file.